

**Abstract**

A novel distributed architecture for deploying a plurality of wireless local-area networks is disclosed. The illustrative embodiment enables some of the protocols of a protocol stack to be "off-loaded" from wireless access points to a remote central controller. In particular, protocols whose services operate correctly regardless of the presence or magnitude of processing and communication delays are off-loaded to the central controller, while protocols whose services operate correctly only when delays are below a threshold remain in the wireless access points. The illustrative embodiment thus enables the use of "thin" (*i.e.*, reduced-functionality) access points, thereby reducing cost and facilitating maintenance when deploying multiple wireless local-area networks (for example, on a corporate or academic campus).